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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION

EXTENSION SERVICE

Washington 25, D. C.

January 1, 1945

To: Director M. L. Wilson
From: Lester A. Schlup
Subject: 1944 Report of Division of Extension Information

Another milepost has been passed and it is time again to give you the high lights from the past year's record of the Division of Extension Information.

We believe that 1944 was the best year we have had in this Division. Relationships improved all around. We had a better synchronized program, more teamwork, more enthusiasm, more spirit. It was a hard year for us with an ever-increasing tempo of demands on our time and effort. We did not succeed in doing all the things we should have liked to do, but we are proud of the advances that were made, and we were glad of the opportunity to be of service.

We.....all of us.....appreciate the opportunity of working under your leadership. We also want to pay tribute to the excellent help and cooperation of all members of the staff in every division, which helped to make our work easier and more enjoyable.

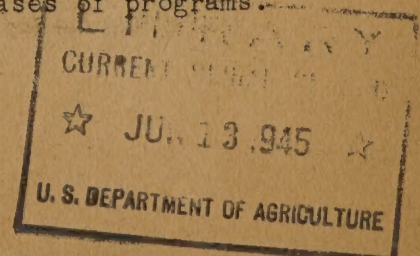
Service was the keynote which actuated the efforts of the Division of Extension Information in 1944.....service to State extension directors and editors.....service to the War Food Administration-USDA on its programs to stimulate food production.....service to the Director of Extension Work.....service to magazines, the radio, and the press.....service to our associates in the Federal Extension Service. If the service was not at all times perfect, it was not because the spirit was unwilling, but because the greatly increased volume of activity and the swift program changes necessitated by war made it difficult for our small staff working long hours to meet the constant demands.

An information office has many responsibilities. It is torn constantly by the necessity for focusing its efforts upon several objectives, all of which are important.

Service on New WFA-USDA Developments

The most pressing requirement during the year was to keep the States swiftly informed about the shifts and changes in the various WFA-USDA programs. This was given No. 1 priority in 1944. In doing this it is not only necessary to keep constantly alert to possible new developments, but to maintain good relationships with many key people, a prime necessity if a service of this character is to reflect frequently shifting currents in programs or phases of programs.

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These new developments were reflected in many telegrams sent to the State extension directors, in 52 weekly letters which were maintained on a rigid time schedule, and in some special letters, where an emergency situation demanded them. However, in accordance with the wishes expressed by the State directors, the number of letters going to the States was reduced to the minimum and information ordinarily carried in separate letters was incorporated wherever possible in the weekly letters.

Better Understanding of Extension Encouraged

One of the objectives of the year was to build a better understanding of the Cooperative Extension Service as a democratic organization which reflects local, State, and national agricultural requirements. This objective had two prongs.

I. Better Understanding Among Cooperating Agencies

One prong was that which concerned the establishment of closer cooperative effort with the USDA Office of Information, with OPA, and with other agencies having basic information useful in agricultural education.....cooperative relations on the inside front, you might say. Working shoulder to shoulder with Keith Himebaugh, USDA Director of Information, greater progress was made in this field than in any previous year in Extension history. Mr. Himebaugh's attitude toward these cooperative endeavors were ably reflected in his address at the Land-Grant College Association meeting. Previous to that, policies and procedures had been jointly worked out which provided for:

- (1) Distribution of publications in quantities to States only when the State directors ask for them.
- (2) Better coordination of Federal-State popular publications by
(a) providing States with advance lists of U.S.D.A. publications being considered for printing; (b) by asking the States to supply us with their advance lists of publications in the mill. (The first phase of this program is well established. The second phase is not operating well because many colleges are not providing us with the information.)
- (3) Better publications planning by the Department in order to provide bulletins on subjects which are in greatest demand locally. (This requires specific recommendations from the States, the mechanism for which is not yet well established.)
- (4) The preparation of publications better adapted for teaching through the review of USDA popular publications by a Federal Extension Committee. Purpose of this is to make recommendations designed to help in making bulletins reflect better the educational needs of the States. (Setting up this plan has been temporarily postponed until the other publications operations are better established.)

- (5) Distribution of radio transcriptions through State extension editors and by them to State radio stations. This plan was adopted to avoid the unintentional broadcasting of agricultural information in a State where the subject matter does not apply, and to permit the extension editor to supply additional, more localized subject matter, or to supplement the transcriptions with live talks by State or county extension workers. (This plan is working successfully in the Department and in most States. Some States, however, are not capitalizing upon it very effectively.)
- (6) Distribution of motion pictures for rural showings through the State extension services. (This plan is not yet fully successful. Much depends upon the ability of State extension services to make wide and constant use of these movies.)
- (7) Reflection in the Department's motion picture program of the recommendations of State extension services for "how-to-do-it" movies needed in educational work. (A letter asking for State suggestions for the 1945 production program was sent to directors on December 20.)

These represent new policies and activities started in 1944 which reflect the truism that information is not effective unless locally adapted and applied. These efforts throw additional work on the Federal and State extension offices, but it is work that is in furtherance of objectives long sought and the kind that will serve farmer and national interests most effectively.

Another phase of the job of advancing better understanding of the Cooperative Extension Service inside the Federal Government.....and outside too, for that matter.....was the work that was accomplished with the Scrapbook. You will recall that you asked each of the directors to supply us with publications, news, radio, and other materials used in production-goals education. These were assembled and the best representing every State and Territory on every major phase of farm production were placed in a Scrapbook. This you formally presented to the WFA administrator and the Secretary of Agriculture. We also prepared separate books for each State and Territory for reference use in the Library. The Scrapbook was multilithed and sent to all directors, to high WFA-USDA officials, and to the various agencies. Stories illustrated with the picture of the presentation ceremony were used by several magazines. This one thing alone was very helpful in getting the Extension story better understood by influential persons.

The Scrapbook activity is illustrative of several other major efforts in this field, such as, for instance, the luncheon organized at which War Mobilization Byrnes discussed extension work and which Marvin Jones and other officials attended, the cooperative projects engaged in with H. H. Williamson of OPA to familiarize the OPA field force with the Extension educational program, and the like.

II. Better Public Understanding

I said before that the objective of building a better understanding of cooperative extension work had two prongs. A few examples of the work done on the inside front have just been discussed. The other prong concerns extension information going out through communication media.....magazines, press, radio, etc.....to the public, or, through correspondence and direct contact, to officers of influential civic, business, farm, labor, professional, fraternal, and other types of organizations.

Magazines - Considerable progress was made in 1944 in stepping up the program to reach the public through general-interest or special group-interest magazines. Through the Department's magazine liaison representative in New York City, through OWI, and in other direct ways, more than 50 magazines were interested in various aspects of extension work, and most of these carried one or more stories. In some instances information was supplied from our office, and in others the magazines were referred to States or counties to get stories. Some of the outstanding stories in magazines and papers with wide circulation upon which help was given were:

Please! No More Crackpot Schemes for Veterans. - By Harold Titus in Saturday Evening Post, November 18, 1944.

County Agent. - A popular pictorial presentation of a New Jersey county agent in Parade Magazine for September 10, 1944.

4-H Clubs. - Cover page and article on 4-H Clubs in California in December 1 issue of Family Circle (magazine issued by Safeway Stores).

Healing War's Heartaches. - By Lydia Ann Lynde as told to Bess Furman of the Washington Bureau, New York Times, to appear in an early issue of Woman's Home Companion.

Home Demonstration Work. - Article by Bess Furman of Washington Bureau, appeared in August 31 issue of the New York Times.

Many more similar stories could be cited. (See special report on magazine work.)

Several extension editors gave valued help in servicing magazines with stories in the interest of the Cooperative Extension Service. Among these were Frank Jeter of North Carolina, Sam Reck of New Jersey, and J. P. Carmichael of Georgia.

Organizations and Special Groups - Very little was accomplished in a systematic way in making contacts with organizations and special groups, with the exception of information on the farm labor program. However, plans were started near the end of the year to prepare a master list of magazines and organizations which it would be desirable to provide with factual accounts of Extension operations, and a special effort will be made in 1945 to get the Extension story more widely understood by the more influential urban people, through house organs and contacts of organizations and special groups.

Radio

In the radio field, special effort was made to follow developments in FM, television, and facsimile broadcasting, and to keep State directors and editors informed of hearings before the Federal Communications Commission and other developments that will be of major concern in educational use of radio after the war.

A large part of our work results in keeping field extension workers informed of new developments, which provide material for local radio use.

During the year we were able to further strengthen relations with the Department Radio Service whereby State extension editors handled local distribution of some 8,000 copies of transcribed radio broadcasts from the Department, and distribution of a much larger amount of daily Farm Flashes and Homemakers' Chats, prepared for localization and use by extension agents and local radio stations. We cooperated with the Radio Service in arranging for 75 extension broadcasts during the year on national networks. The OWI estimates that 4-H Mobilization announcements were carried on commercial programs with a total of 82,000,000 listeners, and that on the average every citizen in the country heard our special farm labor announcements over commercial network programs four times during the year.

Exhibits

One example of our exhibits work was an exhibit on the principles of extension work, started for the war-torn countries conference here, perfected, and shown at the meetings of the Land-Grant College Association and National Association of County Agricultural Agents in Chicago.

In response to requests from State extension directors, we made four sets of a simplified version of this exhibit for loan to the States, and they are being kept busy. We also furnished pictures of the exhibit to all States, and a number of States are localizing and copying the exhibit. The exhibit was centered upon the theme, "Cooperative Extension Work - Where Science Joins Local Experience."

We also cooperated in several effective exhibits on farm labor, 4-H Club work, and other activities.

Extension Seal and Popular Definitive Statement

The directors at their regional meetings expressed a need for a revision of the Cooperative Extension Service seal. We are now developing a number of suggestive seals which will be submitted for your consideration and the consideration of State extension directors when completed.

The committee which you appointed is now preparing a brief popular statement about cooperative extension work, which will be submitted to you on January 15.

Service to State Extension Editors

On August 5, we started a weekly letter to State extension editors, in addition to the weekly policy news letter we prepare for you to send to State directors. This allows us to keep necessary nonpolicy information material out of your letter, gives us additional regular contact with the editors, and one such letter often saves several special letters.

In addition to the radio material and radio training assistance outlined under the previous "radio" heading, we work with the Press Service in providing extension editors with a steady flow of suggested news stories for localization use. We recently planned and financed a field trip for the Chief of the Press Service to visit several State extension offices, and the result has been a big improvement in this service.

The radio transcription service and expansion of the suggested news-story service was worked out with the Editorial Advisory Committee of extension editors which met here last summer. If travel conditions will permit, we surely hope to arrange a meeting of a similar advisory committee this summer. Such meetings are invaluable in helping us keep our feet on the ground in serving extension editors and in giving leading editors a clearer picture of the information set-up, possibilities, and problems here in the Department looking to closer, more deep-seated cooperation.

Service on National Programs

Our efforts with the national and regional magazines, news service, radio networks, and advertising outlets have been to provide the general educational material about the extension programs with special emphasis usually on a type of "backdrop" material aimed at making the local job easier.

The 50 magazines we have worked directly with, the 75 programs on radio networks, the more than 350 short announcements on commercial network programs, and the heavy cooperation with the national advertising agencies in support of farm labor recruitment, 4-H Club mobilization, Victory Gardens, and the like during the year have totaled the heaviest such national support our division has ever been able to arrange.

Better Administrative Understanding of Information

One of our objectives, as you know, has been to encourage among State extension administrators a better comprehension of information processes in extension work. The information session arranged for the Extension Section of the Land-Grant College Association meeting helped materially in this field. It was the first time in the history of the Association that information was given this honor. Talks were made by an extension editor, an extension director, the U. S. D. A. Director of Information, and myself. An effort to approach information from the vantage point of a president of a land-grant college did not materialize.

Attendance at the regional meetings of the State extension directors was very helpful. It enabled me to discuss with them some of the features of our program and to obtain many helpful suggestions.

Special Services

You are familiar with the EXTENSION SERVICE REVIEW. Our policy of aiming the Review at the average county extension worker and having a very large part of the material come from successful agents and State workers calls for a tremendous lot of planning and searching for good items, as well as correspondence, rewriting, and checking to properly portray each item. The page size of the Review was reduced in 1944, and other steps were taken to streamline its appearance and content.

Other special services included: (1) The large amount of work our Art Unit is doing for other members of the staff, in addition to the Art work we are largely responsible for; (2) the distribution of some 20 million copies of Department publications and about 5 million copies of other publications to State Extension Services; (3) preparation of the Director's Annual Report of Extension Work; and (4) considerable assistance to the Director's office and most of the Divisions in preparation of talks, reports, policy letters, and statements.

What's Ahead for 1945

(1) Clinical Analysis.

One of the next things we plan to do is to arrange a Division Clinic, in which our staff will get together for several days as a group to look into all phases of our activities. We will ask the other Division Chiefs and you to meet separately with us for a short time. Only other conferences and the rush of events prevented us for holding such a clinic in December. Purpose of this clinic will be to realine our sights for 1945.

(2) Better Service to States.

At an advisory committee meeting of State extension editors this summer, if possible, we plan to talk with the editors about specific things we can do to strengthen the extension programs in publications, visual aids, radio, and magazine and press. I'd like to talk over with you before then some of the things we have in mind.

(3) More Field Work Needed.

It is clear that we need to spend more time in the field, both to help in extension information relations and planning there and to help us keep our feet on the ground in arranging for national and State supporting educational material.

(4) Professional Improvement.

We especially are planning to strengthen our efforts in providing the States with material on how to use informational media. We are revising our radio handbook. We have a new visual aids handbook under way for release soon after the war closes. A complete schedule of publications on information and visual media has been developed for later production.

(5) Public Relations.

One of our major efforts during the last year or so has been to get administrative people in the field to better understand the educational and public relations potentialities of what we call the information program, and to get stronger, more understanding, working relationships between the administrator, supervisors, specialists, and extension editor. We have made progress but still have a long way to go.

(6) Positive Information Approach Needed.

We also must seriously consider the considerable amount of anti-extension and inaccurate extension propaganda that is being released by several groups and make every effort to positively and factually interpret the extension story to the public. I have in mind giving the facts to correct impressions the public gets from such stories as: the Extension Service is dominated by the Farm Bureau pressure group; the Extension Service does not work with other farm organization members, or with low-income families; the Extension Service is fighting the AAA; and others that imply that the Extension Service is weak on marketing, conservation, and other important educational work.

Problems

The beauty.....and often the biggest difficulty.....about information work is its breadth. The extension information worker must keep constantly acquainted with the trend of changing policies in order to interpret them properly when the right time comes. He must have close relationships with the persons handling the various public communication channels through which these interpretations must flow. He must have the confidence of his superiors and his associates. He must know many people who can contribute to the success of the extension program.

In addition to that, he must be able to produce.....direct production of copy and visual materials for use by the various media people or indirect production by giving them tips or enlisting their cooperative interest in the program. But that isn't all, he must be willing and able to give a tremendous amount of the service type of help to other staff members in the organization.....art work, preparation of talks, planning and preparing publications, clearance of materials, letters, and a thousand and one other services.

One perplexing problem is how to meet all these obligations with a small staff. Without going into too much detail, let me outline some of the larger aspects of this problem.

(1) We must handle effectively the services to the States -- your weekly letter to the State extension directors and other letters outlining new policies and programs.....the Extension Service Review, publications, radio, news, and similar services.

(2) We must handle services through outside public communication channels.....magazines, radio, press, cooperating organizations, etc.....direct or through OWI, the U.S.D.A. Office of Information, agency editors, etc. That involves considerable production.

(3) We must handle services for you and other members of the staff, such as the preparation of talks, art work, and the like.

(4) Not only are we responsible for information work on extension programs, such as 4-H Club work, 8-point dairy program, farm labor, and the like, but we must necessarily work closely with the Office of Information on virtually all of the WFA-USDA programs. We must also work with most of the WFA-USDA agency editors in reflecting their agency programs in Extension information.

(5) We must write annual reports, special statements, and publications on various phases of extension work.

(6) We must provide help to State extension editors on planning, producing and using information and visual media.

We find it impossible to handle all these and other responsibilities equally effectively. On some we are doing no more than working around their fringe. We hope you will understand, though, that this is due, not to lack of appreciation of these responsibilities, but simply to the fact that there is not staff enough nor time enough to handle much more than the accelerated press of current emergency demands. Every person in our division is working under forced draught, but their efforts are scattered over too many fronts.

